DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 270 896 EA 018 591

AUTHOR Fenton, Edwin; Wasserman, Elsa R.
TITLE A Leader's Guide to Improving School Climate through Implementing the Fairness Committee. A Manual for Students and Teachers--(A Community Approach to Resolving Grievances).
INSTITUTION Cambridge Public Schools, MA.
PUB DATE Jun 85
NOTE 75p.
AVAILABLE FROM Moral Education Resource Fund, Harvard Graduate School for Education, Larson Hall, 12 Appian Way, Cambridge, MA 02138 ($12.00 plus postage).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Materials (For Learner) (051) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Committees; *Conflict Resolution; *Grievance Procedures; Interpersonal Communication; Participative Decision Making; Policy Formation; Problem Solving; School Policy; Secondary Education; Student Government; Student Organizations; Student Problems; Student Responsibility; *Student Rights; *Student School Relationship; Teacher Student Relationship; Teacher Workshops
IDENTIFIERS *Fairness; *Fairness Committees; Massachusetts

ABSTRACT

A fairness committee consists of a group of about 15 people, usually students, teachers, and administrators, who are either volunteers or are elected. This committee tries to improve the overall school climate by improving the quality of relationships between students, teachers, and administrators. It offers a neutral place for individuals to bring complaints of unfair treatment and proposes resolutions to conflicts. It also trains students in conflict negotiation and advocacy skills. This participant's manual grew out of nine years of experience with various forms of fairness committees in a variety of schools, beginning with Cambridge Rindge and Latin School (Massachusetts). The manual consists of two major parts: (1) a teaching guide for leaders of fairness committee training workshops for students and teachers; and (2) a workbook text for workshop participants. Each part is divided into 15 sections for use in 5 meetings, each consisting of 3 sessions. Major topics covered in these meetings include: understanding the term "fairness," developing interviewing and listening skills, defining the parameters of a fairness committee, reviewing examples of previous fairness cases, and making plans to establish a fairness committee in the participants' schools. (IW)

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A LEADER'S GUIDE TO IMPROVING SCHOOL CLIMATE THROUGH IMPLEMENTING THE FAIRNESS COMMITTEE

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A MANUAL FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS— (A COMMUNITY APPROACH TO RESOLVING GRIEVANCES)

EA 018 591

BY:

Dr. Edwin Fenton, Carnegie-Mellon University

Dr. Elsa R. Wasserman, Cambridge (MA) Public Schools

Dedicated to the
Students on the
First Fairness Committee
(1976)
Cambridge Rindge and Latin School.

They had the courage to
"dare to care."

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PREFACE

This Participant's Manual has grown out of nine year's of experience with various forms pf Fairness Committees in a variety of schools. Literally hundreds of people have contribututed to this work -- students, teachers, counselors, staff members, school officials, and others. The pioneering work began in Cambridge Rindge and Latin School under the leadership of Superintendent William Lannon, former Headmaster Michael Turner, and current Principal, Edward Sarasin. Out of this work grew a Manual written by Elsa Wasserman, Neen Hunt, Pam Chamberlain, and Phyllis Bretholz.

As we tried this manual in other settings, however, we recognized a need to make it more applicable to a variety of schools. We also recognized a need for a manual which stressed staff training. A generous grant from the Emil Schwarzhaupt Foundation enabled us to revise the manual and include a staff training component. Edwin Fenton joined the staff of the project at this point.

We tested these revised materials in workshops at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, Madison Park High School, and Charlestown High School. As a result of these field tests, we made numerous revisions in our preliminary version of the Manual until it achieved its present form.

In addition to the individuals mentioned above we wish to express our gratitude to a number of educators in schools where we have worked. They include Melaine Barron, Ralph Berkowitz, Vivian Carlo, Robert Murphy, Robert S. Peterkin, and Sidney Smith from the Boston School Department; Henry Lucas and Kate McMahan from Cambridge Rindge and Latin; and Dan French and Bob Winfield from the Department of Education of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We are particularly grateful to Carl Tjerandsen, Executive Secretary of the Emil Schwartzhaupt Foundation for his faith in our work and his steadfast support of our endeavors. Finally, we tip our hat to Ralph Tyler, who recommended us to Tjerandsen, and to Larry Kohlberg, who asked us hard questions and cheered many of our answers.

Elsa R. Wasserman

Ted Fenton

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After giving them a quick review, many teachers unceremoniously deposit copies of Leaders' Guides in their round files. Many Guides deserve this fate. Some are little more than an expanded table of contents. Others, impractical and theoretical, offer busy people little concrete help. This Guide, we trust, is different. It reflects our experience in a number of workshops and is filled with concrete, practical suggestions stemming both from theory and from work in the field.

We have found that many leaders who use this guide for the first time follow it with religious devotion. It functions as a useful security blanket. In subsequent workshops, however, these same leaders have adapted our suggestions, adding here, subtracting there, changing order and so forth. This procedure seems sensible to us. providing the best of two worlds-- experiential and creative.

We have planned these workshops around five meetings each consisting of three sessions. A workshop should last for three hours, giving about one hour per session. Some schools, however, have been unwilling to free participants for three hours at a time, five weeks in a row. In those cases, we have adapted the workshop to the schedule which the school imposed. You should be aware, however, that our plans posit five, three-hour sessions and that we have provided for personal introductions and between-workshop readings and assignments with our five meeting format in mind. In some schools, administrators suggested a Friday evening and all day Saturday schedule on successive weekends. They paid participants for this extra time. Our plans can be adapted to this schedule, although the two sets of interviews called for between the first and second and the third and fourth workshop must be conducted during the same period.

Should your school have a Fiarness Committee? Only you and your colleagues can answer this question. Our experience, however, suggests that Fairness Committees cannot operate effectively unless all or most of the following conditions exist:

Schoolwide conditions:

1. The Principal and the other members of the administration strongly support the idea and the functions of a Fairness Committee.

2. The Principal and the members of the Committee have had an honest discussion about the school rules and policies that are absolutely non-negotiable. These issues are usually associated with state laws, school committee regulations, and issues of safety.

3. A clear understanding of the role of the Fairness Committee in relation to other governance structures of the school, such as the Student Council, has been developed.

4. The entire school community is willing to make changes when they see that benefits will result.

5. The school community believes that people are more likely to abide by decisions when they have had a voice in making them.

6. The students and staff of the school have been given ample time and opportunity to learn about the functions of the Fairness Committee.

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7. The school recognizes that students want a fair hearing and can more easily accept school rules and policies when they have heard from an appropriate adult the reasons why rules and policies are constructed in a particular way.

The Fairness Committee itself:

1. An in-house person is assigned to lead the Fairness Committee and recieves sufficient time and training to do the job well.

2. The school allots sufficient time to train the members of the Committee. We believe that the fifteen hours called for in this workshop is about right.

3. The school establishes a regularly scheduled time for the Fairness Committee to meet, during school hours.

4. The staff person has good relationships with other staff members in the school in order to be able to get at least four or five other staff members to participate in Fairness Committee meetings on a regular basis.

5. The staff person is able to utilize the advisory capacity of the Fairness Committee to enlist the aid of other groups in the school to do the work which the Fairness Committee may recommend, such as start an anti-vandalism drive, work to change a school rule, or have an interracial day.

6. Members of the Committee recognize that service on the Committee will give them lifelong skills as well as improve the climate of the school.

Will you please share your experiences with us? Literally hundreds of people have contributed ideas which have been incorporated into the present version of this workshop. Will you please follow in their footsteps? We are particularly anxious to know whether you would like to attend a one-week training session designed for school personnel who want to lead Fairness Committees in their schools. If we receive a positive response to this query, we will organize such workshops during future summers. Please address suggestions and questions to:

Dr. Elsa R. Wasserman
Cambridge School Department
159 Thorndike Street
Cambridge, MA 02141

Ted Fenton
Elsa Wasserman

June, 1985

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SESSION 1: PERSONAL INTRODUCTIONS

Objectives:

1. To know the names of all participants in the workshop.
2. To be able to make statements about how it feels to be treated fairly or unfairly in school.
3. To know why fairness committees are important and how they fit into the life of the school.
4. To begin to know the goals of fairness committees both for the school and for the growth of the participants in the committees.
5. To know the major activities of each of the sessions of the workshop.

Materials:

1. The entire Participants' Guide (to be distributed)
2. Name tags and magic markers
3. Either chalkboard and chalk or newsprint and magic markers
4. A roster sheet

Proceedings:

Distributing materials: As participants enter the room, introduce yourself and ask them to make out a name card with the name they would like to be called during the workshop in big letters on the card. At the same time, have them sign in on a roster with their names and information about how to contact them in school, such as a homeroom number. Give each participant a copy of the Manual and let them look at it until everyone is assembled and the formal workshop begins. Call attention to Page which describes what we are going to do during the first session of the workshop.

Personal introductions: Seat all participants-- students, teachers, yourself, etc.-- in a circle (shoulder-to-shoulder) so that everyone can see and hear each other easily. Refer students to the first page of the Manual. Either have them read this page or tell them what it says, referring them to the highlighted words. Then begin the introductions yourself and have all participants introduce themselves around the circle. As participants give examples of fair and unfair treatment, ask them how they felt in the instances they cite. In workshops we have conducted, participants have been able to express their feelings accurately and have seemed eager to do so. If an individual has trouble finding words, a little active listening may help.

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Processing the introductions: When the introductions are finished, the workshop leader should summarize what participants have said, first about instances of fair treatment and then about cases of unfair treatment. In conclusion, the leader should stress that fairness committees try to bring about a total school climate in which everyone-- students, teachers, administrators, and staff-- feel that they are treated fairly, that is, feel the sentiments expressed by the members of the group as they commented about instances of fair treatment they had encountered.

Name learning exercise: Now turn to the name learning exercise. Have each individual in the group give his name one at a time. Tell everyone else to look closely at this person and to associate the name with something about him: Ron/red shirt. Then have everyone say the person's name in chorus: Ron. Do this same activity for the next four persons in the circle. Then have the whole group name the five people in order: Ron, Juanita, Betty, Willie, Emery. Now go to the sixth person and repeat the process with persons six through ten. Keep this up until everyone has been included. Now have participants remove their name tags temporarily. Ask for a volunteer to name everyone in the circle. Let a couple of people do it. Give volunteers a big hand. Have participants put their name tags on again.

Why fairness committees are important: The leader should tell participants about fairness committees. Among the important points to cover are (note the space that follows for you to add points of your own):

1. A Fairness Committee consists of a group of people, usually students, teachers, and administrators numbering about fifteen in all, who are either volunteers, elected or cycled on and off the committee by a school requirement. Students and teachers who have brought issues before the Fairness Committee are urged to become members. Their perspective will add another dimension in the resolution of Fairness Issues.

2. Fairness committees try to improve climate by improving relationships among people.

3. The committee has a variety of functions. For a list, see the materials entitled Preparing for Session 7, particularly the three sections entitled "What the Committee Does," "What Will You Gain," and "Why a Joint Student/ Teacher Committee".

4.

5.

Outlining the workshop: Walk the students through the Manual, session by session. In a sentence or two, describe what they will be doing in each session. Stress the importance of preparing for four of the sessions by doing the interviews or the reading called for in the Manual.

Questions, suggestions, and comments: Make sure that you leave a few minutes for participants to ask questions, make suggestions, or comment on what has taken place thus far in the workshop.

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SESSION 2: UNDERSTANDING FAIRNESS BY BRAINSTORMING

Objectives:

1. To be able to define fairness as the term applies to the work of Fairness Committees.

Materials:

1. Participants' Manual, p. 2
2. Chalkboard and chalk or newsprint and magic marker

Procedures:

Preparing for the brainstorming session: Have students read Page 3 or, if you prefer, go over the materials orally. Make sure that they understand what they are to do during the brainstorming period. Ask "What are you supposed to do when the session starts?" to make sure that they know they are to shout out words which occur to them as they think about fairness.

Brainstorming: Send someone to the chalkboard to write as you lead this part of the session. Then ask what fariness means to participants. You will probably get a variety of responses such as respect, freedom of speech, equality, and so forth. Write all of these suggestions on the board. Be sure everyone has a chance to contribute, perhaps by calling on some members who have not volunteered. As soon as you have a long list, ask for one more item and then close this part of the session.

Classifying: Now ask the participants to think of ways to classify the items on the board. They may suggest rights, ways to treat people, and feelings, for example, but every group will probably have its own way to classify items depending on what is on the list. Classifying helps to give dimension to the concept of fairness and to point out its complex nature.

Developing a definition of fairness: Now ask each participant to write out a definition of fairness working from the classifications the group has made and from the examples on the chalkboard. Writing helps to highlight all the elements of fairness which the exercise has revealed. Have several participants read their definitions and comment positively on their most outstanding attributes. Work toward a group consensus about a definition, a consensus which may build upon several definitions.

Reversing the coin: Thinking about unfair treatment: Start by talking briefly about how fair treatment makes people feel. Then ask students about their reactions to unfair treatment. Process for "fight, flight, or submit" on the board to classify three types of reactions to unfair treatment. Students usually respond sympathetically to these words since so many of them have had one or more of these three reactions to unfair treatment. End by stressing that Fairness Committees are designed to head off these three reactions, and others like them, by helping to guarantee fair treatment in schools.

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SESSION 3: LEARNING TO INTERVIEW

Objectives:

1. To develop a list of interview questions for students to use between the first and second workshop meetings.

2. To develop interviewing skills by providing practice before friendly critics

3. To commit each participant to doing two interviews before the next workshop meeting.

Materials:

1. Manual, p. 3,4

2. Several 4 X 6 or 5 X 7 cards per participant

3. Chalkboard and chalk or newsprint and magic marker

Procedures:

Introducing the exercise: Explain that this exercise forms a central part of the entire workshop. The two sets of interviews, one of students and the other of faculty, administration and staff, provide vital information for the group to work with. In addition, interviewing is a vital life skill that everyone should learn. During the coming interval between workshop meetings, each participant is to interview two students; for session 10, everyone will interview two faculty, staff, or administration members. Then participants can compare the opinions of these two vital groups of people.

Developing interview questions: Send someone to the board to record proceedings. Ask participants to suggest questions which get at the outstanding features of the school. If questions come slowly or miss a key element, make suggestions: "Anything about the building?" "Are there teachers, counselors, or administrators you can talk to easily?" Try for an extensive list. When you have compiled one, ask each participant to copy some of the questions from the list to use in their own interviews. This procedure gives each person a chance to build a unique list of questions. Then turn to questions about features of the school which may be unfair and follow the same procedure.

Describe probing procedures: Tell students about what to do when they get one word or incomplete answers. Emphasize the importance of asking why students hold a certain opinion. Give participants a short list of useful probes which lead to amplification: "Tell me more about that." "Can you give me an example of what you mean?" "Does something like that happen a lot?" "Does what you say apply to most people or only a few?"

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Doing a model interview: Now interview a participant just as if you were doing an interview for the next workshop. Be sure to take notes on a card. Spend about five minutes at the process. Then ask participants to describe what you did in order to identify salient features of your interviewing technique.

Doing interviews in pairs: Pair participants and have each person in the pair interview the other one. Require everyone to take notes. Circulate from one pair to another to give help. After about five minutes, stop the proceedings to ask about any difficulties participants have encountered. Remind participants that the reason for this exercise is to learn interviewing skills and to gather information about issues you may want to pursue in Fairness Committee meetings.

Setting up the next workshop: Make sure that participants have noted the time and place of the next meeting on page of their Manual. Stress the importance of doing the interviews before that time. You may want each participant to write a note reminding himself or his partner about the interviews. Have them address them to homerooms, collect them, and put them in appropriate mailboxes a few days before the next meeting. Make sure that all participants have note cards before they leave.

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SESSION 4: WHAT DID YOU LEARN IN YOUR INTERVIEW?

Objectives:

1. To reinforce learning names from the first workshop sessions
2. To identify what students think are the outstanding features of the school
3. To identify practices which students think are unfair
4. To make prelimiary judgements about the most appropriate unfair practices for a Fairness Committee to focus on

Materials:

1. Manual, p. 5,6
2. Chalkboard and chalk or newsprint and magic marker
3. Participants' cards from their interviews

Procedures:

Personal introductions: If this workshop runs in five, three-hour sessions as we suggest, begin this second workshop by having participants reintroduce themselves using the technique suggested in the manual.

Listing outstanding features: Have a recorder list outstanding features on the chalkboard or newsprint as participants mention them. Go around the circle asking participants what they learned about outstanding features in their interviews. Each person might be limited to one feature on the first round and then asked to name others after everyone has had a turn. Stress this positive aspect of the day's proceedings. Students should feel proud of their school, and this exercise is a good way to give substance to that pride. Make sure that someone copies the list from the board onto paper so that it can be reproduced for use during Session 10. If you use newsprint, save it for Session 10.

Listing unfair features: Now turn to unfair features which have been unearthed and make another list. Again have someone copy this list for use in Session 10 or save the newsprint.

Soliciting student experiences: As students talk about unfair events, many of them will probably bring up things that have happened to them. When they do so, let them talk and help them to process what happened, perhaps seeking an explanation for whatever it was.

Identifying salient practices to work on: Ask participants which of the unfair incidents they heard about would make the best subjects for work by a Fairness Committee. Some of these incidents may stem from a situation which a Fairness Committee cannot change. This exercise should help participants think about what a committee can and cannot do in preparation for Session 6.

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SESSION 5: UNDERSTANDING FAIRNESS BY DISCUSSING A DILEMMA

Objectives:

1. To learn how to understand fairness by looking at an issue from the perspective of each of the participants

2. To develop listening and speaking skills essential to constructive work on a Fairness Committee or in other activities

Materials:

1. Manual, p. 7,8

2. Either the sound filmstrip of Mr. Peterson's Dilemms or the printed version, one for each participant, which follows in this Manual.

Procedures:

Identifying the dilemma: Either play the sound filmstrip or have the participants read the dilemma. Then, in two or three minutes, ask a series of questions to make sure that everyone understands the facts of the case and can state the dilemma clearly. For example, ask:

Who was Mr. Peterson and what topics had he taught?

Did students like and trust him?

What did the students tell him they were going to do? What did they ask him to do?

What school rule applied to this situation? How was the rule related to Mr. Peterson's contract?

Now, what was Mr. Peterson's dilemma?

Taking a tentative position on the dilemma: Ask each participant to write responses to two questions: Should Mr. Peterson tell the administration about the students' plans? What are your two most important reasons for recommending what you do? Walk around the room to help students who may not have started to write. After a couple of minutes, ask for a show of hands, starting with the group which your observation as you walked around the room revealed has the smaller number of adherents: "How many thought he should not tell?" "How many thought he should?"

Small group meetings: Divide the participants into two groups, those who thought he should tell and those who did not. Give the groups no more than five minutes to talk among themselves in order to decide the best reason and the second best reason for their decision. Move quickly from one group to another to make sure that participants focus on the assigned task.

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MR. PETERSON'S DILEMMA

Mr. Peterson taught social studies in the local high school. He had a reputation as one of the best teachers in the school, partly bacause he got along so well with his students. In his class, Mr. Peterson had included a unit on the American tradition of protest. The members of the class had discussed this subject many times.

One day several class members told Mr. Peterson that they planned to organize a protest in support of migrant farm workers. The cafeteria used non-union lettuce. The students had already asked school authorities to use only union lettuce and grapes. But school policy had not changed. In addition to boycotting the cafeteria themselves, the students said they hoped to shut it down by setting up a picket line at lunchtime. They insisted that the success of their plan depended on Mr. Peterson keeping their confidence. They insisted that he should not tell the school administrators.

Mr. Peterson was sure that the other teachers and administrators did not know about the planned picket line. He also knew that some students would not by sympathetic to picketing and that they might try to break through the picket line. He remembered that a school rule required students to clear any organized gathering with school officials. The students had not done so. The faculty rules required him to tell his administrators of any activity that might interfere with the school schedule. This rule was in the contract he had signed with the school board when he took his job as a teacher. But after a long discussion of all these points with the students, they were determined to go ahead with their plans.

Question: Should Mr. Peterson tell the school administrators about the students' plans to picket the school cafeteria? Why or why not?

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Full group discussion: Seat all participants in a circle and take a seat in the circle yourself. Ask a member of the minority group to report the best reason which that group had identified. Then ask a member of the majority group to paraphrase that reason to make sure that everyone understands it. Next ask for a response to the reason. Switch to a different member of the majority group and ask for its main reason. Again ask for a paraphrase and a response. As the discussion proceeds, you can use the following types of questions to keep it going:

1. Should Mr. Peterson worry about whether or not his students have a good opinion of him? Why or why not?

2. How should the students treat Mr. Peterson if he tells the administrators of their plans? Why?

3. Mr. Peterson has a contract with the school system which requires him to tell the administration about the students' plans. Should he honor that contract? Why or why not?

4. Is it all right to break a law to help your friends or your students? Why or why not?

5. What are the major rights involved in this case? (Make a list of them on the chalkboard as students suggest them.) Which of these rights is most important? Why?

Focusing on fairness: At some point in the discussion, raise the issue of fairness. Ask participants what would be the fairest thing to do from the point of view of all the participants in the dilemma: Mr. Peterson, the students in his class, the rest of the students in the school, the school principal, the cafeteria workers, students who might be hurt if trouble broke out in the cafeteria, parents of children in the school, the police and so forth. This exercise should help students to expand the concept of fairness they have developed and to practice role playing, a key element in fairness procedures.

Reevaluating positions: About five minutes before the end of the session, ask each participant to answer the two questions to which they responded previously again. What should Mr. Peterson do? Why? Then discuss whether or not people change their minds either about the action Peterson should take or about the reasons for that action.

Note: The fairest solution is the one that each player in the dilemma would accept were he/she in each of the roles.

Fairness means taking into account all the perspectives.

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SESSION 6: WHAT CAN/SHOULD A FAIRNESS COMMITTEE DO?

Objectives:

1. To know objectives and issues which are or are not appropriate for a Fairness Committee to handle

2. To begin to develop a set of goals for a Fairness Committee in the school

3. To begin to develop a set of goals for the participants in the Fairness Committee

Materials:

1. Manual, pp. 9-18

Proceedings:

Group work: Have students read the material about Session 6 on page 9 in the Manual or go over the material orally. Then divide participants into groups of three to work with the chart on page 10 about what Fairness Committees can and should do. Tell each group to come to consensus if possible about each item on the list. Bring this activity to an end when most of the groups have finished.

Reaching consensus on the results: We have provided a checklist on the following page which indicates our answers to the questions on the worksheet. Our experience indicates that participants will tend to check many more activities as suitable for Fairness Committees than the ones we think are appropriate. When they do so, be sure to process the issue. In many cases, Fairness Committees have an advisory function. They may make suggestions to administrators or advise groups about issues or possible solutions to problems. It is important to carefully define the relationship of the fairness committee to other school governance structures.

Developing goals for the school: Once they realize what fairness committees can and should do, participants are ready to develop goals for their organization. We have provided a partial list to get them started on page 11 of the Manual. Participants should first decide whether or not they wish to incorporate these statements into their own set of goals. They may wish to eliminate some of them or to edit them in some way. Then they should add others to the list in the space provided.

Preparing for the next workshop: Walk participants through the assignment for the next workshop meeting. They should look at the response sheet and the reading itself. Most participants finish this work in about a half hour, but in some workshops we have conducted, participants did not do the work at all perhaps because we did not sufficiently emphasize its importance.

Leaders' preparation: Be sure to acquire the handouts and lists of school rules described on page 19.

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WHAT CAN/SHOULD A FAIRNESS COMMITTEE DO?

	FAIRNESS COMMITTEE	STUDENT GOVERNMENT	NEITHER
1. Change graduation requirements.			✓
2. Change attendance policy.			✓
3. Shorten the lunch time.		✓	
4. Resolve a dispute between a teacher and a student.	✓		
5. Change course offerings.			✓
6. Shorten the school day.			✓
7. Revise the student handbook.		✓	
8. Redress the distribution of prizes and awards.	✓		
9. Strengthen communication between parents and school groups.			
10. Set up a tutoring program for young children.		✓	
11. Publish a newspaper.		✓	
12. Bring in controversial speakers.		✓	
13. Organize trips.		✓	
14. Paint a mural on an empty wall.		✓	
15. Plan a racial/ethnic fair.		✓	
16. Work to improve school attendance.		✓	
17. Start a program to reduce vandalism.		✓	
18. Raise money for school events.		✓	
19. Examine the school's entrance requirements.	✓		
20. Listen to students' complaints.	✓		
21. Listen to teachers' complaints.	✓		
22. Get smoking privileges for students and teachers.		✓	
23. Intervene in a racial disturbance where the fault is not clear.	✓		
24. Work to get students' privileges restored.	✓		
25. Try to get school rules changes.	✓		

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SESSION 7: STUDENT RIGHTS AND FAIRNESS

Objectives:

1. To know answers to six vital questions about fairness committees
2. To be able to state a number of rights that students have, rights which come from the Constitution and which are embedded in state education and school board regulations
3. To be able to apply statements of rights to actual cases which have occurred in schools
4. To be able to state accurately the relationship between rights stated in state handbooks or school board regulations and the functions of fairness committees

Materials:

1. Manual, pp 19 and 20
2. Response sheets to "Fairness Committees: An Introduction"
3. State handbooks about student rights, one copy for each participant
4. School board regulations about student rights and responsibilities, one copy for each participant

Procedures:

Examining the agenda: Go over the agenda on page 19 to preview the three parts of the workshop for the day.

Procuring materials: In advance of this meeting, each workshop leader must obtain copies of state and school board regulations about student rights. They usually appear in a Handbook obtainable free of charge or at minimal cost from a state agency. Without these materials, you cannot follow our plans for Session 7, a key ingredient in the workshop. Be sure to familiarize yourself with these publications and to relate the cases on page 20 to appropriate places in the Handbook.

Using the response sheets: Go over the answers to the questions on the response sheet. Encourage discussion of each of the answers to be sure that students understand them. These questions get at key issues underlying fairness committees and their functioning in the schools, and they are vital for students and other participants to understand.

Examining cases: Now turn to the list of cases on page 20. Read the material in the first case and ask participants if they think there has been a violation. After a brief discussion, refer them to the appropriate page in the Handbook which discusses the right under dispute. The Handbook will have a clear statement about rights which will reveal whether or not a basic right has been violated. Participants are frequently surprised to learn how their rights are or are not violated.

Relating the exercise to the work of the committee: Students must realize that fairness almost always involves rights in some ways. They should know that the first step to take in a hearing often involves finding out what the law and school board regulations say. Emphasize that all participants should bring their Handbooks and copies of school regulations to Fairness Committee meetings.

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SESSION 8: LEARNING TO BE A GOOD LISTENER

Objectives:

1. To develop listening skills on which the success of Fairness Committees rests in part

2. To develop constructive attitudes toward the growth of listening skills

Materials:

1. Manual, pp. 21-23

Procedures:

Stressing the importance of good listening: Begin by stressing the importance of good listening to the success of fairness committees. You may choose to begin with a question about this relationship and then develop the argument as participants respond. Spend only a few minutes on this prelimiary material.

The science and art of hearing: a meditation exercise: Direct participants to page 21 in the Manual. Read the first three passages aloud. Then make sure that participants understand the directions in the fourth passage. Have the participants follow these directions, listening quietly to themselves for from three to five minutes. Then read the rest of the passages as the participants follow along in their texts.

Processing this experience: Ask participants how they felt during this quiet period of listening to themselves. They will probably use terms such as calm, relaxed, uncluttered, contemplative and so forth. Point out that good listeners approach a listening task on a fairness committee with feelings such as these. Emotion and anger get in the way of good listening and set up barriers to accurate communication.

Exercise 1: The Garbled Message: Use this exercise if your group has had little experience with listening skills training. Pick a message sufficiently long to provide a sample for the group. Sample:

"The key to effective communication is the willingness for all parties to listen very carefully to each other."

Rules: 1. Say the message only once.
2. Whisper so that only the person next to you can hear.
3. Try to repeat the message accurately

Go around the circle once with the message. Ask the last person to say the message aloud. Chances are there will be more than one inaccuracy and the final message may not make much sense. Lead a short discussion on what the results of the exercise may mean. Suggest questions:

1. Why did the message change?
2. What makes it difficult to carry the message accurately?
3. How is this like real life communication?

Process for participants realizing the importance of really listening, taking it seriously, etc.

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Try again with another message. Challenge the group to keep the message exactly the same. Sample message #2:

"If the Fairness Committee members practice resolving cases, they can take a more active role in helping people settle their differences."

Exercise 2: How Attitudes Affect Listening: The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate that good listening can be blocked by the attitudes a listener brings to the conversation. Divide the members into two groups - Group A and Group B. Tell Group A that they will role play good listening and always being truthful. Tell them that Group B never tells the truth. Inform Group B that they will play bored listeners and always trusting everyone. Tell them that Group A has the reputation of never trusting anyone. Bring Groups A and B back together and divide into pairs, one A and one B.

Instruct the whole group that for the next two minutes all the B's will describe what they were doing last night around 9 p.m. A's will listen and ask questions if they feel like it. B's then tell A's the answer to the same question.

A's and B's should think for a moment when it is their turn, remembering their roles. Keep the activity short.

Lead a discussion about what actually happened during these short conversations.

Suggested Questions:

1. As a listener, how were you influenced by the other person's reputation?
2. As a speaker, how did you feel your words were being received?

Point out that everyone brings attitudes into any conversation and that negative attitudes will probably have a negative influence. Try to keep an open mind.

Exercise 3: Repeat After Me: This exercise helps participants to determine their ability to listen objectively. Give the following introduction: In order to hear what someone says, you have to listen. That's obvious, but sometimes people listen through a filter that screens out everything but what they want to hear. This is called subjective listening. Objective listening is hearing exactly what someone says. This kind of listening is particularly helpful for Fairness Committee members. It is a skill that can be learned and can help you figure out exactly what happened. Then read through the instructions on page together.

Processing this experience: Ask participants the following questions:

1. How did you feel about keeping your opinions to yourself?
2. How did you feel telling your story to a listener who did not give opinions?
3. Did you feel that you got the facts?

Reinforce the point that good listening for Fairness Committee members means withholding judgements and not being influenced by personal feelings.

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SESSION 9: TO TELL THE TRUTH

Objectives:

1. To practice active listening
2. To learn how to assess the accuracy of stories when witnesses give conflicting testimony

Materials:

1. Manual, p. 24, 25

Procedures:

Choosing protagonists: Choose three articulate participants to act as witnesses in this case. One should play Mr. Vincent, one Jerry Jones, and the other Agnes Smith. Tell the rest of the participants that they will be members of the Fairness Committee and that the three witnesses are presenting a case before them so that they can practice listening skills and other procedures involved in a fairness hearing.

Taking testimony: Have each witness appear in turn and tell his/her story. Witnesses may embellish a bit from what appears in the text. Ask participants to repeat in their own words what a witness says to check listening skills. Then permit them to ask questions to get at any parts of the testimony which do not seem clear.

Evaluating the testimony: Turn to the four questions at the bottom of the page. Have the participants answer each one in turn striving for consensus as you do so. This process should take no more than ten minutes or so.

Discussing the issue raised by this process: Ask participants to suppose that they were members of a Fairness Committee and had heard the testimony of these three witnesses. What do they think that the goal of the committee should be? Students may make a lot of suggestions. Many of them will argue that the committee ought to act like a jury and decide who is right and who is wrong. This is not the best solution since the fairness committee is not a jury and is not in the business of deciding cases. The goal of the fairness committee is to improve relationships. Perhaps the best solution is to get the three witnesses, particularly Mr. Vincent and Jerry, to agree that it was an accident and that they ought to shake hands and figure out why each one thinks the other does not like him or is out to get him. If they cannot do that, they ought to agree on the spot about what to do about the issues so that they can have improved relationships.

Preparing for the next workshop meeting: Refer participants to page 25 in the Manual which describes interviews with faculty, administrators, counselors, or staff to be conducted before the next meeting of the workshop. Stress the importance of doing these interviews. Make sure that each participant has written the time and place of the next meeting in the space provided on page 19.

SESSION 10: COMPARING STUDENT WITH FACULTY/STAFF OPINION

Objectives:

1. To recognize that people with different roles in an organization like a school often have different perspectives on vital issues

2. To learn how to compare and contrast perspectives through a structured discussion

Materials:

1. Manual, p. 26

2. Chalkboard and chalk or newsprint and magic marker

3. A list of student judgements about the school's outstanding features and unfair practices compiled during Session 4

4. Results on the participants' interviews

Procedures:

Examining the agenda: Quickly go over the three items on the agenda for the day. They appear at the bottom of page 26.

Getting started: Place participants in a circle. Have them tell the positions of the people they interviewd: teachers, administrators, counselors, other staff. Keep a tabulation on the chalkboard by name of participant.

Receiving reports: First call on the participants who interviewed teachers. Ask them to give the teachers nominees for outstanding features and unfair practices. Keep a list under TEACHERS on the chalkboard or newsprint. Then go through the same process for administrators, counselors, and other staff, subdividing other staff if you wish.

Examining similarities and differences: Now look at all the lists to seek agreements and disagreements about both outstanding features and unfair practices. Some differences seem certain to appear. Ask why these different groups see the same institution sometimes in the same way and at other times in different ways.

Comparing students with other school personnel: Now distribute the lists of outstanding features and unfair practices compiled from student interviews at Session 4. How does this list compare with the ones on the board? In most instances, students have identified some outstanding features of the school which parallel those of the adult members of the school community, but in most cases differences between students and adults appear on both lists. Discuss why these similarities and differences emerge.

Identifying salient issues: Ask participants to examine the evidence their interviews have uncovered to isolate issues which might be good ones for a Fairness Committee to tackle if an appropriate case comes up. If many groups identify something as unfair, for example, this issue would be a good target.

Publicity: You might suggest that the results of these interviews would make good material for an article in the school newspaper. Stress outstanding features first and then take up issues which seemed unfair to one group or another.

SESSION 11: HOW TO GET THE FACTS FROM SOMEONE

Objectives:

1. To know techniques for questioning a witness in order to get out all the facts in a case

Materials:

1. Manual, pp. 27,28

2. Fact Sheet for Mrs. Claims which you will find after the materials for Session 11 in this Guide

Procedures:

Preparing someone to role play Mrs. Claims: Choose a participant to play Mrs. Claims, preferably someone who is comfortable playing a role. Give this person the Fact Sheet which contains all the information about the incident described in the Manual. You may want to coach this person about how to behave under questioning.

Preparing for session: Have the participants read page 27 or go over it orally if you prefer. Make sure that they know what they are going to do. Then have the participants develop a list of questions they are going to ask Mrs. Claims after they have assimilated all the information in the Manual about her and her case.

Interviewing Mrs. Claims: Now question Mrs. Claims using the questions developed by the group. All the participants should take part in this questioning, just as if they were a Fairness Committee out to get the facts and get them straight. When the interview is over, ask Mrs. Claims if the group missed any vital questions they should have asked in order to get at all the facts. Process her answer.

Answering the questions on pp. 27 and 28: Turn to the five questions at the bottom of p. 27 and the top of p. 28 and have participants answer each of them in turn. This is the heart of the session when participants register information about themselves and the techniques they have used. For this reason, it will be useful to spend several minutes on the answer to each question.

A FACT SHEET FOR MRS. CLAIMS

Directions: Read and answer all questions from Fairness Committee members as truthfully as you can. Do not volunteer any information. Wait for people to ask the right questions. Keep reminding the committee of why you are coming to them with your complaint.

1. On Tuesday, January 14, Ms. Claims received a letter from the City Police.

2. The letter stated that her son, George, would be cited for trespassing if he appeared anywhere on the high school grounds.

3. On January 9, George was attending an evening basketball game at the high school, and was asked to leave by the principal, Mr. Powers.

4. George put up a fight and had to be physically taken from the gym.

5. George is 19 and quit the school when he was 16.

6. He quit school because he felt the administration was giving him a hard time.

7. As a student, he was accused of different things: shoving a teacher; cutting electric wires; beating up another student.

8. George now works as a garage mechanic and wants to continue his education.

9. Ms. Claims wants her son on school grounds to pick up his sister, who has arthritis.

10. Ms. Claims wants the Fairness Committee to find out if George has a right to be on the school grounds.

SESSION 12: HOW A FAIRNESS COMMITTEE WORKS

Objectives:

1. To be able to describe the roles which members of a Fairness Committee must play in order to function effectively

2. To know how a Fairness Committee functions when presented with a case

Materials:

1. Manual, pp. 29-36

Procedures:

Preliminary explanations: Begin by explaining that this skit has been written to highlight certain roles which members of Fairness Committees take. Stress that every member of the Committee in real life plays all of these roles. In other words, an actual committee does not assign one person to be an advocate and another person to be a fact finder. Everyone does both of these jobs as well as all the others involved in the skit. The skit separates these functions and assigns them to individuals in order to highlight each role and fix it in the minds of all participants.

Assigning roles: Assign individuals to play the eight roles on page 31. You may assign two people to some roles and have them read passages turn about so that everyone gets involved. Have the participants read about the roles on pages so that everyone knows what the roles are. Through this process, they learn about some of the roles they are supposed to take on the Committee.

Reading the skit: Now have the participants read the skit. Groups we have worked with have always enjoyed doing so and have thrown themselves into the act. Have fun.

Debriefing the role play: Turn to the questions on page 36 and go through them carefully. They help participants to clarify the roles which have been exemplified in the skit. Participants should write the answers the group arrives at to these questions in the space provided. End this part of the session by emphasizing again that every participant in a Fairness Committee plays all of these roles. In an actual hearing, no roles are assigned.

Preparing for the next workshop: Call attention to pages 37, 38 which contains a list of questions participants are supposed to answer before the next meeting of the workshop. Emphsize the importance of this activity. Make sure that everyone has noted the time and place of the next meeting in the space provided on page 26.

SESSIONS 13 AND 14: TWO FAIRNESS CASES

Objectives:

1. To be able to play all the roles studied in the previous session as participants take part in hearings of two fairness questions

2. To become confident that participants can conduct a fairness hearing well

Materials;

1. Manual, pp. 39-41

2. Chalkboard and chalk or newsprint and magic marker

Procedures:

Introductions: Start with the participants in a circle. Ask each one to give an example of something he or she has encountered in the news or in life since the workshop began that reminds them of a fairness issue. Keep this part of the session brief.

Setting up "Request to transfer from class": Have the participants read the letter from the student to the headmaster. Ask them who ought to be involved in the hearing. They should identify the student and the two teachers. Make sure that everyone knows why these people are essential to the hearing while the headmaster is not, at least at the moment.

Assigning roles: Assign three of the participants to play these three roles. You may want to brief them about what they should do while the remainder of the participants organize themselves as a Fairness Committee.

Conducting the first hearing: Just tell the Committee to proceed. Tell them to keep in mind the roles they learned from the skit. You may wish to write a list of these roles on the chalkboard so that participants can keep them in mind. The participants should work toward a solution of this problem by agreement among the three parties involved.

Debriefing the hearing: Now debrief the hearing for the participants. Emphasize the aspects of the hearing that went particularly well. Make a list on the chalkboard. Then indicate areas that require improvement, making another list. Invite participants to contribute to this work. Some leaders may prefer to begin by asking participants what went particularly well and what they had trouble with rather than doing this work themselves.

The second case study: Repeat this entire procedure for the second case study which involved Marjorie K. In preparation, call attention to the lists of strengths and weaknesses on the chalkboard from the first hearing. Encourage participants to work hard on the areas where they found shortcomings.

Processing the case studies: At the end of the session, the leader should process for the following issues as well as others that may turn up:

The quality of interviewing skills to get at fact finding

Searching for all perspectives in a case

The appropriateness of the committee's recommendations

Listening skills

Advocacy skills

Summarizing the sessions: The major aim of this summary should be to assure the participants that they have done a good job and can handle an actual case with the same skill. Clearly and upbeat expression of confidence and congratulations is called for.

SESSION 15: MAKING A PLAN OF ACTION

Objectives:

1. To develop a written plan of action leading to the establishment of a working Fairness Committee in the school

2. To develop enthusiasm for the work of the Committee and commitment to carry a share of the responsibility for it

Materials and People:

1. Manual, p. 42

2. Participants' response sheets to questions they answered in preparation for this session

3. Chalkboard and chalk or newsprint and magic marker

4. The school principal

Procedures;

Opening the session: Begin the session by reviewing very briefly the work which has been done thus far. This final session, you might say, marks a transition between study and action and is the key session on which success will depend in the future.

Discussing the preparation questions: Now turn to the six questions which participants were supposed to answer in preparation for this session. Discuss each one fully. As this discussion takes place, make a list of tasks which need to be done so that people can be assigned to do them.

Discussing your plans with the principal: The school principal should come to the meeting about a half hour before it ends. Participants should report to him or her, telling what they have done in the workshop and asking assistance in accomplishing the next steps. Try to finalize plans with the principal, assigning various tasks to people, arranging for someone to talk at a faculty meeting, and so forth.

Participants Manual Following Permission to Reproduce

IMPROVING SCHOOL CLIMATE THROUGH IMPLEMENTING THE FAIRNESS COMMITTEE

A PARTICIPANT'S MANUAL

BY:

Dr. Edwin Fenton, Carnegie-Mellon University
Dr. Elsa R. Wasserman, Cambridge Massachusetts Public Schools
Dr. Neen Hunt, The Calhoun School
Pamela Chamerlain, Bureau of Student Services,
Department of Education, Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Phyllis Bretholtz, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School

Dedicated to the
Students on the
First Fairness Committee
(1976)
Cambridge Rindge and Latin School.

They had the courage to
"dare to care."

PREFACE

This Participant's Manual has grown out of nine year's of experience with various forms pf Fairness Committees in a variety of schools. Literally hundreds of people have contribututed to this work -- students, teachers, counselors, staff members, school officials, and others. The pioneering work began in Cambridge Rindge and Latin School under the leadership of Superintendent William Lannon, former Headmaster Michael Turner, and current Principal, Edward Sarasin. Out of this work grew a Manual written by Elsa Wasserman, Neen Hunt, Pam Chamberlain, and Phyllis Bretholz.

As we tried this manual in other settings, however, we recognized a need to make it more applicable to a variety of schools. We also recognized a need for a manual which stressed staff training. A generous grant from the Emil Schwarzhaupt Foundation enabled us to revise the manual and include a staff training component. Edwin Fenton joined the staff of the project at this point.

We tested these revised materials in workshops at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, Madison Park High School, and Charlestown High School. As a result of these field tests, we made numerous revisions in our preliminary version of the Manual until it achieved its present form.

In addition to the individuals mentioned above we wish to express our gratitude to a number of educators in schools where we have worked. They include Melaine Barron, Ralph Berkowitz, Vivian Carlo, Robert Murphy, Robert S. Peterkin, and Sidney Smith from the Boston School Department; Henry Lucas and Kate McMahan from Cambridge Rindge and Latin; and Dan French and Bob Winfield from the Department of Education of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We are particularly grateful to Carl Tjerandsen, Executive Secretary of the Emil Schwartzhaupt Foundation for his faith in our work and his steadfast support of our endeavors. Finally, we tip our hat to Ralph Tyler, who recommended us to Tjerandsen, and to Larry Kohlberg, who asked us hard questions and cheered many of our answers.

Elsa R. Wasserman
Ted Fenton

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SESSION 1
PERSONAL INTRODUCTIONS

Let's begin by introducing ourselves and relating our introductions to the theme of this workshop -- fairness. In a few minutes, your workshop leader will ask you to seat yourself so that everyone can see and hear each other well, perhaps in a circle. Then each of you will introduce yourselves by giving us the following information:

* THE NAME you would like us to use during this workshop.
* THE POSITION you have IN YOUR SCHOOL -- sophomore, science teacher, counselor, representative from the Student Senate, and so forth.
* Either an EXAMPLE of when you were TREATED UNFAIRLY OR an EXAMPLE OF FAIR TREATMENT. In either case, the example should be taken from school -- in the classroom, in hallways or a playground, on an athletic team, in a personal encounter with a teacher or students, and so forth. Keep your example short, no more than a minute or so. Your workshop leader will speak first to give you an example of the amount of detail you should include. Be sure to tell us how this example of fair or unfair treatment made you feel.

EXAMINING THE AGENDA

During the few minutes remaining, we will examine the agenda for the day. Here it is:

Session 1: PERSONAL INTRODUCTIONS
Session 2: UNDERSTANDING FAIRNESS
Session 3: LEARNING TO INTERVIEW
PREPARING FOR THE NEXT WORKSHOP

The next workshop will be held on _____
from _____ to _____ o'clock in Room _____.

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SESSION 2
UNDERSTANDING FAIRNESS: BRAINSTORMING

What does it mean to be fair?

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language gives fifteen definitions. Here they are:

fair (far) *adj.* fairer, fairest. **1.** Visually beautiful or admirable; lovely; *a fair maiden.* **2.** Of light color, as; a. Blond: *fair hair.* b. Pale or white, not ruddy; *fair skin.* **3.** Clear and sunny; free of clouds or storms: *fair skies.* **4.** Free of blemishes; unstained; clean. *one's fair name.* **5.** Regular and even: a fair edge. **6.** Free of obstacles; open: *fair sailing.* **7.** Promising; likely; propitious: *in a fair way to succeed.* **8.** Free of favoritism or bias; impartial: *a fair judge.* **9.** Just to all parties; equitable: *a fair compromise.* **10.** Consistent with rules, logic, or ethics: *a fair tactic.* **11.** Moderateley good; mildly satisfying: *a fair job of redecorating.* **12.** Courteous; agreeable: *fair manners.* **13.** Superficially true or good; specious: *They coaxed us with fair words.* **14.** Lawful to hunt or attack: *fair game.* **15.** *Baseball.* Designating or falling into the area of the playing field bounded by the foul lines.

Bewildering, isn't it?

Obviously a fairness committee does not concern itself with most of these kinds of fairness. Fair maidens, fair skin, fair skies, fair name, fair edge, fair sailing--none of these "fairs" is for us. This workshop focuses on fair treatment of people in schools. But the words "fair treatment" mean different things to different people. The exercise which follows will help us to develop our own definition of fairness.

Your workshop leader will ask you to brainstorm what you mean by fairness. Leaders use brainstorming to stimulate creative thinking. All you do to start is to think about what pops into your head when someone says fair or fairness to you. Words like "equal" or "by the rules" may occur to you. Shout these words or phrases during the brainstorming session. Someone will write them on the chalkboard. When you have created a long list, you or your workshop leader will classify them under major headings. This classification system will help you to understand fairness in all its dimensions.

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Before the next workshop session, you are to interview two students about issues of fairness in your school. When the workshop meets again, all of you will have interviewed two people. By pooling what you learn from the interviews, the members of the workshop will probably be able to get a good sampling of what the whole student body thinks. Your workshop leader will help you to choose the two students you will interview so that the committee members interview roughly equal numbers of boys and girls from each grade and ethnic group.

Start your interview by asking the person to name and talk about the most outstanding feature of your school. Doing so sets a good tone and provides you and the committee with a lot of valuable information. A person might mention the school's academic standing, its athletic teams, the fine faculty, an outstanding student body, a beautiful new building or something else. Then probe a little-- why is whatever the person mentioned so outstanding? Are there other outstanding features of the school?

Next ask what, if anything, the person finds around the school which seems unfair to him or her. Some people may not think that anything is unfair-- an important finding even though this statement may disappoint you. Other

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people may ask for an example in which case you had better be ready to give one. Again probe behind the opening statement-- why do you think whatever it is is unfair? Can you name anything else that is unfair?

Take careful notes on your interview so that you have a full record about what has been said. Then make out a four-by-six card for every person you interviewed. Bring both your notes and the card to the next workshop session. On the card write your name, the name of the person interviewed and his/her class in school. Then describe what the person told you about the best feature of the school. On the back of the card, describe what seemed unfair to the person you interviewed.

During the remainder of this session, your workshop leader will help you to develop a list of interview questions. Then you will role play an interview.

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SESSION 4

WHAT DID YOU LEARN IN YOUR INTERVIEW?

In our first session today we will introduce ourselves and begin to work with information from our interviews. First, let's turn to the introductions.

We will be seated in a circle, just as we were during the first workshop meeting. Please introduce yourself by giving your name and anything which occurred to you during the time since our first session about the session or about Fairness Committees in general. Then we will ask someone to name all the participants seated in the circle.

Next we will talk about your interviews. Either your workshop leader or someone the leader appoints will go to the chalkboard. As you talk, this person will make two lists. One list will be made up of the outstanding features of the school. The other will consist of any unfair paractices which have been found.

When all of you have reported, your workshop leader will lead a discussion of what you have learned, using the lists on the chalkboard. Your leader will also ask someone to copy the list and to reproduce it for distribution. You can then use this list to compare what students thought with the ideas which you will later gather in interviews with faculty and staff members. This exercise will take place when the workshop meets for the third time.

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During the few minutes remaining, we will examine the agenda:

Session 4: INTRODUCTIONS

Session 5: UNDERSTANDING FAIRNESS BY DISCUSSING A DILEMMA

Session 6: WHAT CAN/SHOULD FAIRNESS COMMITTEES DO?
PREPARING FOR THE NEXT WORKSHOP

The next workshop will be held on _____

from _____ to _____ o'clock

in Room _____.

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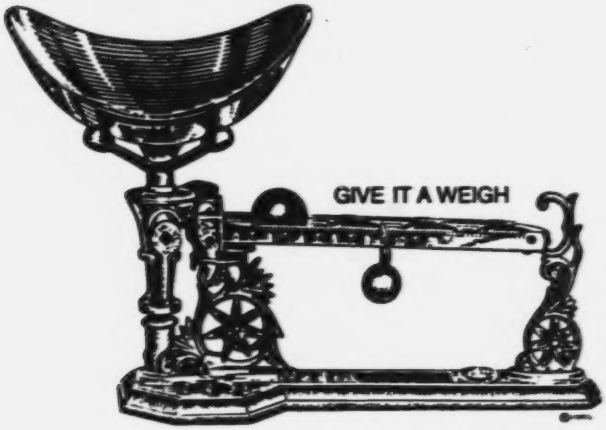
SESSION 5

UNDERSTANDING FAIRNESS BY DISCUSSING A DILEMMA



A dilemma presents a situation in which one must choose between two good alternatives. If one alternative is clearly better than the other, no true dilemma exists. But if one can find good reason to take either of two actions, one faces a dilemma. And dilemmas often involve questions of fairness. "What is the fairest course to take," a person involved in a dilemma often asks herself.

In a few minutes, your workshop leader will show you a sound filmstrip or ask you to read p. which portrays a dilemma in which a high school social studies teacher found himself. This teacher faced the problem of fairness. What was the fair, the right thing to do in this particular situation? After you view and listen to the sound filmstrip or read the dilemma, your workshop leader will lead a discussion in which you will talk about the fairest thing for the teacher to do.

Like the brainstorming exercise, this dilemma discussion should help you to define clearly what you mean by fair or fairness. Concepts like fairness grow in meaning as we study and think about them. People who work on fairness committees need to think about this concept in depth. Your workshop leader will help you to relate what you learned from the dilemma to the classification system which emerged from your brainstorming session.

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MR. PETERSON'S DILEMMA

Mr. Peterson taught social studies in the local high school. He had a reputation as one of the best teachers in the school, partly because he got along so well with his students. In his class, Mr. Peterson had included a unit on the American tradition of protest. The members of the class had discussed this subject many times.

One day several class members told Mr. Peterson that they planned to organize a protest in support of migrant farm workers. The cafeteria used non-union lettuce. The students had already asked school authorities to use only union lettuce and grapes. But school policy had not changed. In addition to boycotting the cafeteria themselves, the students said they hoped to shut it down by setting up a picket line at lunchtime. They insisted that the success of their plan depended on Mr. Peterson keeping their confidence. They insisted that he should not tell the school administrators.

Mr. Peterson was sure that the other teachers and administrators did not know about the planned picket line. He also knew that some students would not be sympathetic to picketing and that they might try to break through the picket line. He remembered that a school rule required students to clear any organized gathering with school officials. The students had not done so. The faculty rules required him to tell his administrators of any activity that might interfere with the school schedule. This rule was in the contract he had signed with the school board when he took his job as a teacher. But after a long discussion of all these points with the students, they were determined to go ahead with their plans.

Question: Should Mr. Peterson tell the school administrators about the students' plans to picket the school cafeteria? Why or why not?

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SESSION 6
WHAT CAN/SHOULD A FAIRNESS COMMITTEE DO?

What can a fairness committee do? What should one do? These two questions require careful thought if your fairness committee wishes to get off on the right foot. The school board and state educational officials make some rules which no one in the school can change-- how many days a year students must go to school, for example.

To help you think about what a fairness committee can/should do, we have provided a list of activities on the next page. After each of the twenty-five activities on the list, we have provided spaces in which you can make a check to indicate whether a fairness committee, the student government, or neither one can or should do somethings about the matter.

Your workshop leader will ask you to work in groups of two or three. Within each group, examine each activity and then make a check in the appropriate space. See if you can reach agreement on each issue, but if you cannot, each of you may check the answer you think is right. When everyone has finished, your workshop leader will lead a discussion based on this exercise. Then you will work with the handout on page 11 which lists the goals of fairness committees. You may adopt these goals for your committee or change them if you wish to do so.

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WHAT CAN/SHOULD A FAIRNESS COMMITTEE DO?

	FAIRNESS COMMITTEE	STUDENT GOVERNMENT	NEITHER
1. Change graduation requirements.			
2. Change attendance policy.			
3. Shorten the lunch time.			
4. Resolve a dispute between a teacher and a student.			
5. Change course offerings.			
6. Shorten the school day.			
7. Revise the student handbook.			
8. Redress the distribution of prizes and awards.			
9. Strengthen communication between parents and school groups.			
10. Set up a tutoring program for young children.			
11. Publish a newspaper.			
12. Bring in controversial speakers.			
13. Organize trips.			
14. Paint a mural on an empty wall.			
15. Plan a racial/ethnic fair.			
16. Work to improve school attendance.			
17. Start a program to reduce vandalism.			
18. Raise money for school events.			
19. Examine the school's entrance requirements.			
20. Listen to students' complaints.			
21. Listen to teachers' complaints.			
22. Get smoking privileges for students and teachers.			
23. Intervene in a racial disturbance where the fault is not clear.			
24. Work to get students' privileges restored.			
25. Try to get school rules changes.			

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GOALS OF FAIRNESS COMMITTEES FOR THE SCHOOL

For The School

To improve overall school climate by:

1. Improving relationships between students and staff.
2. Providing a forum for conflict negotiation and resolution.
3. Informing students and staff members about school policy and, if appropriate, recommending changes.
4.
5.
6.

For The Committee Members

To prepare students to become leaders in their school and active citizens of their community by:

1. Learning interpersonal skills such as active listening and interviewing.
2. Learning how to conduct a needs assessment.
3. Learning how to argue for another person's point of view (advocacy).
4. Learning how to prepare for and conduct meetings.
5. Learning how to present a proposal to a principal, a school board, a group of parents, or another individual or group.
6.
7.
8.

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PREPARING FOR SESSION 7

In preparation for the next session of the workshop, we ask you to read a short article entitled "Fairness Committees: An Introduction". This article describes how a fairness committee got started in Cambridge (MA) Rindge and Latin School. It also describes the goals of fairness committees and tells how they function.

We have prepared a "Response Sheet" to accompany the reading. Turn to this response sheet which you will find on the next page and read the questions there. Then, as you read the article, fill in the answers to the questions on the response sheet. Doing this work will help you to make sure that you understand the major points which the article makes.

A RESPONSE SHEET FOR "FAIRNESS COMMITTEES: AN INTRODUCTION

Directions: Fill in the answers to these questions as you read.

1. What was the major goal of the first fairness committee? _____

_____

2. What is your own definition of fairness? _____

_____

_____

3. List four things a fairness committee does:

   1. _____
   2. _____
   3. _____
   4. _____

4. List three things you can learn from working on a fairness committee.

   1. _____
   2. _____
   3. _____

5. Why do fairness committees include teachers as well as students?

_____

_____

_____

6. Why does a fairness committee need to work closely with the student government? _____

_____

_____

Use the space below to write any questions you would like your workshop leader to answer about fairness committees and how they work.

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FAIRNESS COMMITTEES: AN INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1976 the Superintendent of the Cambridge Public Schools suggested a summer workshop to design a new form of student government. Students and teachers wanted to talk about some of their own concerns about rules and policies. We recognized that the greater problem was the climate of the school as a whole. Many students and teachers felt alienated. There didn't seem to be a way to resolve conflicts satisfactorily. This resulted in a general lack of cohesion in the school and little respect for the people who administered it.

These explorations showed that students needed a Grievance Committee, a forum where all kinds of complaints could be heard. A planning group formed, and we decided to call this forum the Fairness Committee. We felt the main function of the committee was to resolve conflict. This was different from standard grievance procedures which set out to "prove" who was right or wrong. What students really wanted was a structure built into the school government that would help improve relationships between students and with teachers and the administration as well. How could we improve relationships if we were out to label someone wrong? The name Fairness Committee stuck, and it reflects the original, positive goals of this summer workshop.

We began to develop guidelines and hold hearings. Even though there was an initial period of distrust, once students participated in a meeting, they found two things. First, the committee supported them for voicing their concerns at all. Second, the committee worked hard to find a resolution which was acceptable to students. Students were amazed at the variety of teachers who took a positive interest in the workings of the committee. These early meetings provided a setting for discussing issues of fairness. Students developed positive relationships with teachers which encouraged them and helped them to keep working in the beginning.

People in the school at large began to see that a group was actually

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working on problems that a lot of people had recognized already. They were pleased to see that something was being done about them. The Fairness Committee became an effective part of the new Student Government.

You can work on improving the climate at your school, too. Many of the problems tackled the first year in Cambridge occur in other high schools, whether they are inner city, suburban or regional schools. Explain to students in your school the positive goal of improving the everyday atmosphere in your school. Arrange to have a group trained in the skills they need by using this manual. Work in conjunction with your student government. You will soon be on your way towards a real improvement in the atmosphere of your school.

WHAT IS FAIRNESS?

Everyday we are constantly confronted with issues of fairness.

For Example: A teenager may complain that she cannot stay out as late as her friends.

Her sister gets privileges that she doesn't.

Her guidance counselor only pays attention to certain kids.

Her teachers don't accept her ideas.

All of us have been treated unfairly, and we can understand what it feels like. It is easy to see why many students have problems in their families or in school. In general people don't know how to resolve conflicts around issues of fairness.

Most fairness problems are communication difficulties; people can't hear the other person's point of view. Being able to see a problem from the perspective of another person is the most important first step in resolving conflicts.

Let's define fairness. Some people would say it's the golden rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." But people understand this in many different ways, depending on how they think about relationships and how they are used to being treated. Perhaps a more useful way for us to

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define fairness is to think in terms of treating people on both sides of a problem with respect. In part this means that both people are willing to see the other as a worthwhile person with a legitimate point of view. It's a recognition that the other person's needs are as real as our own. In this sense the two people are equals, even if one is a student and the other is a principal. They must be willing to take the time to work towards a resolution that both sides can accept and feel no one lost; that's what we mean by fair.

For example, a school administrator may punish a student for breaking a rule, and the administrator may feel that he is being fair. But suppose that the student does not accept the punishment as a fair one or that he believes the rule to be unfair. Suppose that others had also broken the rule and had not been punished. Then he is not likely to respect the administrator. The Fairness Committee is designed to help solve these communication and relationship problems.

What the Committee Does

The Fairness Committee has several functions:

It offers a neutral place for anyone to bring their personal concerns with confidentiality guaranteed and without fear of reprisal;

It listens to complaints of unfair treatment;

It trains students in conflict negotiations, listening and advocacy skills;

It demonstrates that students are not always right and the teacher is not always wrong and vice versa;

It deals with problems of fairness not just to the individuals but it considers the whole school climate (the way students and staff feel about the school and its rules);

It proposes specific school policy changes;

It proposes resolutions to conflicts;

It seeks to improve the quality of relationships between students, teachers and administrators;

It prepares students to become leaders in their school and active citizens in their community by dealing with real issues for real people - you and your friends.

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What the Committee is Not!

It is not a court which decides who is right or who is wrong.

What You Will Gain From Working on the Committee

You will learn a lot more things than mentioned here, but some of the more specific things you will learn are:

Understanding the other person's point of view (role-taking)

Advocacy

Conflict resolution

Learning to help other students in your school

Preparing yourself for life with skills that will help you to have better relationships at home, on the job, as a parent and as a future member of groups such as a School Committee or Tenant Council.

The Committee will help you develop more honest and open relationships with people of all ages and types. It will help you become more skilled in decision-making so that you can be an important member of your community.

The first Fairness Committee started in The Cambridge Rindge and Latin School in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1976 because many students felt they were treated unfairly. When faced with a decision by a teacher or administrator, they sometimes felt they couldn't accept it. At times they couldn't understand the reason for the decision or they felt discrimiated against. At other times they thought the decision was too harsh or they were accused wrongly or it just seemed wrong and they couldn't say why. Also some students felt that they were treated unfairly by other students. They complained that they didn't understand why they were excluded from certain clubs. These are common problems in schools and students felt there were no solutions. They saw themselves at a dead end with no way to appeal. They felt powerless. This feeling of powerlessness often leads students to act out in non-productive ways like cutting a particular teacher's class, writing on the school walls, smoking dope, or even dropping out.

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Several of these students were the first to volunteer to sit on the first Fairness Committee. As students brought concerns to the Committee, they were asked to stay and help listen to cases. Soon a working group of students developed. They decided to include teachers as well on the Committee.

Why a Joint Teacher-Student Committee?

Teachers are people, too, believe it or not! They share the same feelings of being treated unfairly as students do. This happens in many situations in school. The reasoning behind including the teachers goes something like this: if one goal of the committee is to improve student-teacher relationships, it would be unfair to exclude teachers from this process. One of the most important skills associated with the Committee is understanding other people's point of view.

As Fairness Committee members learn more about what the Fairness Committee means, they begin to recognize that it includes a philosophy, not just a process. If you believe in this philosophy you have to live it, to show that it can work. If you believe that teachers and students can actually communicate better, the Fairness Committee is a model for demonstrating that to the rest of the school.

Where the Fairness Committee Fits Into Your School

A Fairness Committee acting in a vacuum has little effect. It needs support if it is going to have any impact. A good place to begin is through the Student Government, since a goal is not just to seek fairness for one student, but fairness for all. This sometimes means suggesting changes of school policy. However, since the Fairness Committee doesn't have this power, it needs to work closely with a group that does. The Student Government is one example of such a group. All in all, the Fairness Committee needs the support of students, teachers and administrators. The more people included in this work, the more support you're likely to get.

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SESSION 7 RIGHTS AND FAIRNESS

Where do your rights as a student come from? They originate in the Constitution of the United States, particularly the first ten ammendments to the Constitution called the Bill of Rights. They guarantee every American citizen, including students, such fundamental rights as freedom of press, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and due process. Many of your rights are spelled out in local school board regulations. These regulations are supposed to be, and almost always are, based on constitutional rights.

Sometimes schools violate students' legal rights. Sometimes, although they observe constitutional rights, schools treat students unfairly. Members of Fairness Committees must be able to tell the difference between legal issues and fairness issues. Committee members should also be able to decide when a rule, even though it is legal, is not in the best interest of students. If they find such a rule, they have the right-- some people would say the responsibility-- to try to change it.

Every State Department of Education and some school committees publish a Handbook which outlines student rights and responsibilities. In addition, schools publish lists of rules and policies. Your workshop leader will provide each of you with a copy of the handbook from your state. Then when a question of rights comes up, you can look up the appropriate references. You should always bring your Handbook to Fairness Committee meetings.

During this session of the workshop, we will practice identifying your rights. On the page which follows, we have listed nine incidents which actually took place in Massachusetts schools. We will ask you to discuss each one in turn and to decide whether of not a person's rights were violated. Then we will look up the law in our Handbooks. But first, let's examine the agenda:

Session 7: RIGHTS AND FAIRNESS

Session 8: LEARNING TO BE A GOOD LISTENER

Session 9: TO TELL THE TRUTH

PREPARING FOR THE NEXT WORKSHOP

The next workshop will be held on _____

from _____ to _____ o'clock in

Room _____.

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IS THERE A VIOLATION?*

1. Sue wears a T-Shirt to school which proclaims "New wave rots" and is asked to change it before she can return to class.

2. Joe and his friends organize a Socialist Sympathizers Club at Right Wing High and are not allowed to use the P.A., even though the Student Council has used it for dances many times.

3. David arrives to school an hour late because of an early morning Yom Kippur service and receives a detention for being tardy.

4. Andrea refuses to salute the flag in homeroom and is given five demerits.

5. Marjorie walks into her Calculus class at the bell and begins to distribute Pro-Life material. When dismissed from class, she claims that she has a right to distribute non-school supported literature.

6. Mrs. Bouvier, the yearbook advisor, will not allow George to publish his senior informal picture-- taken at a toga party while holding a mug of an unidentified beverage-- because she claims that it is not in good taste and that she has the right to take it out.

7. Shelley's article on the serious drug abuse problem at Goget High School is removed from the school paper after the principal reviews a copy, and she is removed from the staff.

8. Eddie calls Juan numerous names in regard to his ethnic background, telling him in no uncertain terms where he can go. After the ensuing brawl, Eddie is suspended for using fighting words, while he claims that he was exercising his freedom of speech.

* Compiled by Dan French, Massachusetts Department of Education.

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SESSION 8

LEARNING TO BE A GOOD LISTENER

The next two sessions in today's workshop will emphasize the development of good listening skills. Every effective member of a fairness committee must be an active listener. As you know, you will be listening to students, faculty members, and staff of the school as they tell you about incidents which took place. Often two or more people will tell different stories. You will have to decide which story, if either, is more believeable. The first step in this decision-making process involves active listening.

Listening is a skill which can be learned. Many people never learn to listen well. They hear what they want to hear. But sometimes what they want to hear is not what someone else is saying. The two exercises in this session will help you to learn to listen carefully in order to improve communication. The first exercise asks you to listen to yourself.

THE SCIENCE AND ART OF HEARING

Have you ever noticed that you can hear better with your eyes closed?

This is not because you can really hear better but becuase you are putting your attention into your ears.

Most of us are quite psychologically hard-of-hearing. Just as we only half-see, so we only half-listen.

Practice listening now as a group. Close your eyes and listen, quiet your whole body. Listen for at least five minutes. If you become really quiet, you may even hear your heart beating or the blood coursing through your veins.

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We can become better listeners with practice.

Instead of listening to what's going on in our own head, we can learn to listen to what is really going on in the world.

We can listen to the birds or to the city traffic, to the wind or rain, to the crickets, to water seeping, to eggs frying, to footsteps, to alarm clocks, to telephones.

And to what people are really saying.

The truth is we rarely hear what people are really saying because we are listening to ourselves: to all those opinions, ideas, perceptions, thoughts, worries, fears, anxieties we have in our own head. Instead of listening to what's going on "out there," we pay too much attention to what's going on "in here" inside our own heads.

Learn to regard all those voices in your head as "noise" which is interfering with your ability to listen.

OBJECTIVE LISTENING

The remainder of this session will be based on one or more of the following exercises. Your workshop leader will tell you which one to try first.

Exercise 1: The Garbled Message

For this exercise, you will be seated in a circle. Your workshop leader will then whisper a message into the ear of one of the people sitting next to him or her. This person will whisper the message to the next person in the circle and so on around the group. The last person, the one sitting on the other side of the workshop leader, will then repeat the message aloud for everyone to hear. Since the workshop leader will have a written copy of the message in its original form, you will be able to judge how well the message was communicated and to draw conclusions about listening skills from the experience.

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Exercise 2: How Attitudes Affect Listening

For this exercise, your workshop leader will divide participants into two groups. One group will leave the room while the leader gives instructions to the other group. Then the leader will give instructions to the group that left. When the two groups get together, a person from one group will be paired with a person from the other. Your workshop leader will tell you what to do then and give you other directions from time to time.

Exercise 3: Repeat After Me

For this exercise, you must choose a partner and sit facing this person. The first speaker (for example, Brenda) describes something that happened that day and also adds how she felt about it. Brenda talks for a short time, no longer than a minute. Her partner, Keith, listens to what she is saying, and when Brenda has finished, tells her exactly what she said as best he can remember. This is called "reflecting back." You repeat exactly what has been said, and you keep your opinions to yourself. Now Brenda listens to Keith and asks "Is this what I really said?" She corrects him if it isn't. Then they try the whole cycle again with different stories.

Now try this exercise. Are you getting any better at it? Switch partners with another pair and try again. Simple, or not so simple? Talk it over with the group when your workshop leader tells you to. Then score yourself by placing an X on the line below where you think you belong.

- 10	0	+ 10
Subjective Listener		Objective Listener

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SESSION 9

TO TELL THE TRUTH

You are about to read three versions of the same incident which took place in a high school. The versions differ from each other. Your task is to figure out what actually happened. First, read each of the versions carefully. Then think about questions you would like to ask in order to find the truth if you had the three people involved before you. The questions at the bottom of the page will help you in this task.

Version I: My name is Mr. Vincent and I teach biology at Memorial High. I had to use crutches after a skiing accident. One day as I was walking in the hall between classes, one of my crutches flew out from under me. I lost my balance and fell. I was stunned, but I was able to look around quickly and see a few boys trying to hide their laughter. One of them, Jerry Jones, was in my class the previous period. Although I didn't see him actually do anything, I had a strong suspicion he had tripped me, so I told the corridor aide to take him to the Dean's office.

Version II: I'm Jerry Jones, a sophomore at Memorial. I was walking behind Mr. Vincent when he fell. He accused me of tripping him which I definitely did not do! The hall was very crowded. We were all squeezed together. You know how it gets. Probably someone stumbled over his crutch by accident. He chose me because he recognized my face and thinks I don't like him. If I had done it, wouldn't I have tried to get out as fast as I could?

Version III: I'm Agnes Smith and I was in the hall when Mr. Vincent fell. I couldn't see if he was tripped or tripped himself, but I did notice that Jerry Jones was nowhere near Mr. Vincent. The hall was very crowded though. It could have been someone accidentally crashing into his crutches. He's a pretty popular tacher and I don't think anyone would intentionally trip him.

Evaluating To Tell the Truth

1. What do all of these three versions agree on? Make a list.
2. Are there any strong disagreements in the story?
3. What are the facts-- that is, what really happened-- as far as you can tell?
4. What else would you have to do to figure out what really happened?

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PREPARING FOR THE NEXT WORKSHOP

Before the next workshop, you are to interview one member of the faculty and another person who is either an administrator or a member of the school staff, such as a custodian or a secretary. When the workshop meets again, you will be able to pool your information just as you did in Session 4. Your workshop leader will coordinate the interviews to make sure that a representative sample gets covered.

Use the same techniques which you used when you interviewed students. You may want to refer back to page 3 of this Manual to refresh your memory about interviewing technique. Be sure to fill out a four-by-six card just as you did when you interviewed students.

When you meet next time, you will be able to compare what members of the faculty and staff said with what students reported. You will remember that your workshop leader asked someone to copy the list of outstanding and unfair features of your school from the chalkboard. You will get a copy of this list when you meet next time so that you can make comparisons.

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SESSION 10

COMPARING STUDENT WITH FACULTY/STAFF OPINION

In Session 10, we will learn what faculty, administration, and staff members think about our school. Each of you has interviewed two of these people. You should have brought your interview notes and your four-by-six card with you as reminders of what you learned.

You will be seated so that everyone can see and hear everyone else. When your turn comes, describe the people you interviewed (a counselor and a custodian, for example). Then describe briefly what these people thought were the outstanding features of the school. Finally, tell what they thought were the unfair features of school life. Your workshop leader will make two lists on the chalkboard or have someone else make the lists. One will contain outstanding features and the other, unfair practices or events.

Your workshop leader will distribute the lists of students' opinions made during Session 4. Then you can compare what students think with the opinions of faculty, administration, and staff. The session will end with a brief examination of the agenda for the rest of the day.

During the next few minutes, we will examine the agenda for the day. Here it is:

Session 10: COMPARING STUDENT WITH FACULTY/STAFF OPINION

Session 11: HOW TO GET THE FACTS FROM SOMEONE

Session 12: HOW A FAIRNESS COMMITTEE WORKS

The next workshop will be held on _____ from_____ to _____ o'clock in Room_____

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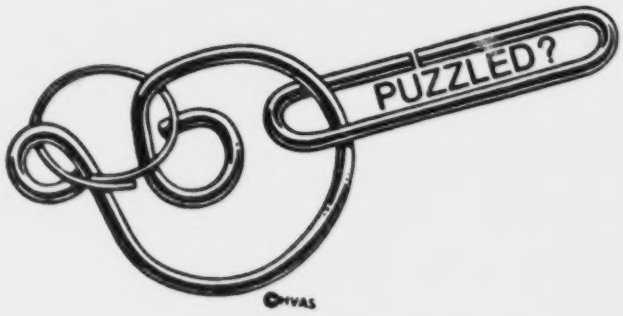
SESSION 11

HOW TO GET THE FACTS FROM SOMEONE



When people come to a Fairness Committee hearing, they sometimes tell their story without giving enough information for you to understand the problem or decide how to help that person. To learn more, you have to draw out information by asking useful questions. You will begin to learn how to ask good questions in this exercise.

Your workshop leader will choose one of you to play Mrs. Claims, a mother who has a complaint. The leader will give this person a Fact Sheet giving all the information about the case. The Fact Sheet tells the whole story but only the person chosen to play Mrs. Claims will read the sheet and know the story. Your job is to find out all that she knows.

Here is Mrs. Claims complaint to the Fairness Committee:

> My son isn't allowed to go onto school grounds. The principal is a tyrant. He's taking me and my husband to court for trespassing. My son's a good boy. People at the school have always picked on him.

Read the complaint several times so that you understand it as well as you can. Then as a group develop a list of questions that you might ask Mrs. Claims in order to get more information. When you have finished your list, ask them as a group to Mrs. Claims. Finally, check with the person playing Mrs. Claims to see how successful your questions were. Did you draw out the complete story from Mrs. Claims? Use the following questions to evaluate what you learned from this exercise.

1. What information did you discover?
2. Which questions were the most successful?
3. Think about the tone of the session, the style in which you asked Mrs. Claims questions. What kind of interviewer are you? How many of these descriptions apply to you?

(next page)

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Extremely polite	Doubting	Argumentative
Objective	Aggressive	Uncertain
Curious	Wishy-washy	Focused only on one issue

Add more adjectives in the space below if you wish to do so.

4. How did your interviewing style affect Mrs. Claims? Why did it affect her in this way?

5. To what degree did getting information about the case change your mind about what should be done?

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SESSION 12

HOW A FAIRNESS COMMITTEE WORKS

The best way to learn how fairness committees work is to see them in action. If you can, go to see a fairness committee in another school and watch it work. If you can't, the skit which follows will illustrate how a fairness committee works on a case. The case has been written to illustrate roles of different members of the committee. The best way to be a member of the committee is to take one of these roles while working on a case.

Your workshop leader will organize the skit. The first step is to choose the roles which each of you will play in the skit. There are five major roles for committee members, and one or more of you should choose each of these roles. In addition, there are three roles -- two students and the principal -- which only one person should play. Each committee member's role has different tasks or responsibilities which are listed on the pages that follow. Your leader will read through this material with you so that you can decide what role you want to play. When all the roles have been chosen, you will read the skit out loud, just as if you were in a real fairness hearing.

At the end of the skit, you will find some questions to help you clarify the different roles and to evaluate the case presented in the skit.

ROLES OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Advocate for the Complaintant

Case Assessor

Administrative Liaison

Fact Finders

Public Relations/
Publicity Person

Advocate:

1. Explains the legal issues pertinent to the incident to the complaintant.

2. Understands complaintant's point of view.

3. Listens and tries to put self in someone else's shoes.

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4. Helps the complaintant to identify and verbalize the specific complaint; understands the particulars of the conflict and the reasons why someone might side with the complaintant.

5. Helps the complaintant get the supportive material for his/her agrument: records, witnesses, test papers, parents, friends, teachers.

6. Helps the complaintant take steps to resolve the conflict informally by speaking to different parties involved in the conflict. Goes with the complaintant to talk with people. Meets will all people that may be party to the case, e.g. school administrators, teachers, etc.

7. In the hearing itself, helps clarify the complaintant's point of view when necessary.

8. Keeps a log of what steps taken to resolve the complaint: dates, steps, results, persons spoken to.

9. Follow-up: Checks to see if complaintant is satisfied - repercussions from incident (policy change, liaison between school committee and fairness committee).

CASE ASSESSOR

1. Listens to the complaintant and attempts to identify the conflict.

2. Identifies the legal issues of the fairness issues related to the incident.

3. Attempts to locate and speak with the other parties in the case who may have other points of view.

4. Makes arrangements for getting the different parties together to settle the conflict (sets up meeting, invites all persons, etc.).

5. Takes responsibility for resolving the conflict - suggests compromise or steps that each party can take to reduce feelings of unfairness.

6. Keeps a log of steps taken: dates, etc.

ADMINISTRATION LIAISON

1. Finds out the administration's point of view of the incident, their legal stand and/or school rules and regulations that may affect the conflict, or the administration's interpretation of those rules.

2. Makes arrangements for different administrators to come to the Fairness Committee to explain their work and have the Fairness Committee explain its work.

3. Shares and explains the recommended resolution of a conflict to the administration in an effort to get them to endorse the resolution, and to take steps to support its implementaiton.

4. Keeps in touch with the administration's level of dissatisfaction with the Fairness Committee, and works to prevent the build-up of unnecessary criticism of the committee.

5. Keeps a log.

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FACT FINDERS

1. Listens to each case and attempts to separate facts of case from people's opinions about what should take place. Lists the facts in an effort to get the most complete, objective description of the incident as possible.

2. Research the facts by following guidelines in materials packet.

3. Keeps records of findings. Tries to compile facts that seem to be important to know for different cases that may arise.

4. Organizes the facts so that they can be presented to the Fairness Committee as each case gets worked on.

PUBLIC RELATIONS/PUBLICITY PERSON

1. Writes stories about the work of the Fairness Committee and perhaps takes pictures. Brings up-to-date information about work of the committee to student publications, and citywide publications.

2. Helps prepare public hearing presentations of cases that come before the Fairness Committee, i.e. to members of the school community.

3. Organizes campaigns that generate cases from student body, teachers, administration through meetings - posters. Publicizes complaint process so that cases reach the Fairness Committee.

4. Keeps teachers informed of Fairness Committee decisions, particularly those that have implications for changes in school policy. Goes to faculty meetings, works with different teachers to get support for fairness suggestions and proposals and opinion polls of teachers on different suggestions.

SKIT - "THE CASE OF THE CORNERED KISSERS"

Fairness Committee Members

Advicate: Ann
Case Assessor: Charles
Administrative Liaison: Linda
Fact Finder: Frank
PR Person: Polly

Others

H.S. Student: Marie Hickey
The Principal: Mr. Heartbreak
Marie's Boyfriend: Donnie

Scene I: Making Contact

Setting: Fairness Committee Meeting Room

Advocate Ann: I was talking to my girlfriend and she knows this girl Marie. Marie's been going around saying that she was suspended for kissing her boyfriend in the hall! Imagine getting suspended for that!

PR Person Polly: We might have a case here.

Case Assessor Charles: Can you get hold of her, Ann, and have her come to our meeting? We could hear her tomorrow or the day after.

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Administrative Liaison Linda: If she's already suspended, Mr. Heartbreak should know she's coming back into the building. I'll tell him when she's coming if she agrees. Will you get back to me before the end of the day, Ann?

Advocate Ann: Sure, I was thinking, though, that we better make sure this is a possible fairness issue. Do we have a school rule about kissing, does anyone know?

Several Members (Ad Lib): I don't know. Do you know? I doubt it, etc.

Fact Finder Frank (thumbing through school handbook): There's nothing here, but maybe there's something we don't know about. I'll check it out with the Assistant Principal.

Assorted Members: Sounds OK to me. See you later. Oh boy, a case, etc. (THEY LEAVE)

Scene II: Hearing One Side of the Story

Setting: The same, two days later.

Advocate Ann: Today we have Marie Hickey and a witness to her suspension. I have decided to be her advocate, and she explained her story to me. I believe she was treated unfairly. I asked her who else she wanted to have here today and she chose her boyfriend Donnie. They'll each tell you what happened.

Case Assessor Charles: Go ahead, Marie. Tell us what happened as you see it.

Marie: OK. I was talking to Donnie in the hallway and we were fooling around...you know.

Case Assessor Charles (can't help smiling): All right, but try to be more specific. What exactly were you doing?

Marie: We were kissing, OK. Big deal. I never denied we were doing that. Mr. Heartbreak came by. He screamed at me like he always does-- "Hey! You know there's no kissing allowed in this school!" And I said, "I'm not doing anything anyone else doesn't do. Why do you always pick on me?" And he said, "I'm going to bounce you! Go to my office." But I didn't do anything wrong, so I said no and he suspended me. That was three days ago. I've been home ever since. And you know, I'm missing finals.

Donnie: The thing is like this. I was kissing her, too, right? So why wasn't I suspended, too? I even went to the office and volunteered for suspension, too, to help Marie out and to show Mr. Heartbreak he was wrong. But it didn't work. It isn't fair.

Case Assessor Charles: What is the rule about this?

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Fact Finder Frank: Well, I checked around. There is no written rule about not kissing in school. But the Assistant Principal says everyone understands that they're not supposed to do it. But some people do it. We all know that. And as far as I can tell, no one has ever been suspended for doing it, before, either.

Advocate Ann: OK. That's one argument we can use. In Massachusetts in order for a rule to be legal, it has to be written down, and by the way, also on file with the State Department of Education.

Marie: It that true?

Advocate Ann: Yeah. Everyone should know that. It sounds like Mr. Heartbreak is not being fair with Marie because he enforced the rule on Marie but not on other people, like Donnie.

Case Assessor Charles: So, from Marie's point of view, she was (1) a victim of an unwritten rule and (2) discriminated against, singled out. Why would anyone want to single you out, Marie?

Marie: Mr. Heartbreak is always picking on me. He's gotten me into trouble before.

Case Assessor Charles: Let's get some more facts about this case. Marie, were you ever notified about your suspension in writing?

Marie: Yes, the day after I went home, a letter came in the mail.

Case Assessor Charles: What did it say?

Marie: That I'm suspended for 10 days.

Advocate Ann: 10 Days! How do you like that? Isn't that ridiculous? That's too much. Also, it's exam period. She may have to make up exams, if her teachers let her. She's losing out on review classes, too. What a drag!

Case Assessor Charles: Is there anything else, Marie?

Marie: He grabbed me there in the hall to drag me to his office. I wouldn't be treated like that. No one touches me! What's the rule about teachers and principals grabbing on students?

Fact Finder Frank: I'll check later today.

Case Assessor Charles: We need to decide if there's enough evidence to consider this a case.

Advocate Ann: I sure think so. If what Marie says is true, it seems she was treated unfairly.

Fact Finder Frank: Also, there may be an illegal suspension here, too.

Case Assessor Charles: Is it settled we want to have a hearing? (Nods of agreement) Who else do we want to be there?

Fact Finder Frank: Mr. Heartbreak, and bring Donnie back, too, as well as Marie.

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Case Assessor Charles: OK. We meet again Wednesday.

Scene III: Getting the Total Picture

Setting: The same, Wednesday

Case Assessor Charles: We've heard a complaint from Marie Hickey about her suspension last week. She feels she was treated unfairly. Can we hear what happened from you?

Mr. Heartbreak: I'm glad I have this opportunity to tell my side of the story. I was supervising the halls between periods, and I saw Marie leaning against Donnie.

Fact Finder Frank: What was Donnie doing?

Mr. Heartbreak: As usual, he wasn't doing anything.

Donnie: Aw, c'mon, Mr. Heartbreak! I was doing just as much as she was and just as much as half the school does.

Mr. Heartbreak: Everyone knows there's no kissing or handholding in the school. Also, and more importantly, I suspended Marie for being insubordinate. I told her to stop kissing and she refused. I told her to go to my office and she wouldn't. We can't afford to have people not respect authority. Things would just fall apart.

Case Assessor Charles: Marie, did you keep on kissing Donnie when Mr. Heartbreak told you to stop?

Marie: I told him I wasn't any different from anyone else, and then I guess I did, just to prove the point. Mr. Heartbreak, you're always screaming and bouncing kids! Why did you give me such a long suspension?

Mr. Heartbreak: You've been suspended three times already this year, and we have a rule that states that the next suspension is automatically 10 days.

Fact Finder Frank: He's right. I checked.

Donnie: Well, what about when you grabbed her?

Mr. Heartbreak: I tried to pursuade her to come by taking her lightly by the arm.

Fact Finder Frank: I found out there's a state law that says it's illegal to refrain students physically - unless you can argue they're a danger like throwing a knife around or going crazy.

Marie: What's so dangerous about a little kiss? He shouldn't have grabbed me. I know that's wrong. He's just out to get me.

Case Assessor Charles: Does anyone have any more questions to ask Marie or Mr. Heartbreak? (He waits. No one does.) Or do either of you want to say anything else? (They don't) Well, thanks for coming them. We'll let you know our suggestions.

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Scene IV: Resolution

Setting: The same, a few days later

Case Assessor Charles: Let's see where we are now. Here's a summary. The prinicpal argues that Marie was suspended for two reasons: (1) she was breaking the no-kissing rule and (2) she didn't obey the directions of the principal. Marie argues that (1) she was kissing, but she wasn't the only one and (2) he was unfair because he grabbed her and gave her too long a suspension.

Advisor Ms. Winkle: This issue of grabbing is really a difficult one. We really can't go anywhere with it, since we need extra witnesses. So we'd better drop it and concentrate on the more important issues.

PR Person Polly: It seems Mr. Heartbreak didn't know the details of the state law about physical restraining. We should let people know that law. I'll write an article and speak to the student government. It won't relate to this case, since our cases are confidential, but it will be general information.

Advocate Ann: Back to Marie. Can we agree it was really unfair to punish Marie alone? Donnie admits he was kissing, too, and it was an inconsistent enforcement of the rule, an unwritten rule at that. And 10 days is too long. That's unfair punishment for this crime, especially since it's exam time. I don't care if she had been suspended before. It's too harsh.

FC Member #1: Yeah, that seems wrong. Maybe she could take her suspended days at another time, like next year. Or maybe she could appeal for a lighter sentence. But what about the insubordination?

FC Member #2: Mr. Heartbreak was right. She did refuse to obey him. She isn't completely innocent.

FC Member #3: But Mr. Heartbreak really led her on - made her talk back to him. It wouldn't have happened if he hed left her alone in the first place.

Administrative Liaison Linda: Well, he is the principal, and she was playing with fire to mess with his power.

FC Member #4: I like the idea that she take her punishment at another time. I do think she should be punished for insubordination but not the kissing rule, since that rule is illegal.

FC Member #5: I think she should appeal such a long suspension. Maybe we should suggest an appeals procedure for that particular rule, the one that requires 10 days suspension.

Case Assessor Charles: OK. Let's say it was wrong of Marie to refuse to obey Mr. Heartbreak. Can we agree she should have some punishment?

Members: (Nods of agreement) Yes.

Case Assessor Charles: But it was wrong of Mr. Heartbreak to punish only Marie an not Donnie too, isn't that right?

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Members: (More nods of agreement)

Case Assessor Charles: So - can we agree that 10 days during exams is too much for Marie, even though she's been in trouble before? How shall we settle this thing?

FS Member #4: I think she should be punished for insubordination but not the kissing, since that rule is illegal. So...maybe she should be punished for 10 days, but she should be allowed to take her punishment at a different time, not during exams.

FC Member #5: I think anyone should be able to appeal a 10 day suspension, so maybe we should suggest an appeals procedure for that particular rule.

Case Assessor Charles: Let's get some agreement from the rest of the members. How many people think the 10 day punishment is too harsh? Any recommendations?

FC Member #6: I say, give her 6 days for insubordination at a non-exam time.

Other Members: Sounds good. OK, etc.

Case Assessor Charles: We've settled on our recommendation for the length of suspension. Let's talk next time about whether we think automatic 10 day suspensions are a good thing in the first place.

Advocate Ann: I'll check Marie's school records to see if her suspension was for insubordination and not kissing.

Questions for the Skit:

1. At what points in the Fairness Committee work was the administration contacted and for what reasons?

2. How do you think the advocate prepared herself to support Marie?

3. What purpose does the article for the school paper serve? Why not write up the whole case and expose Mr. Heartbreak?

4. The Case Assessor makes two summaries. How does he organize the facts and opinions?

5. The advisor points out an issue that was not pursued. What was it? What steps would you have to take if you wanted to follow it up?

6. Were you satisfied with the resolution? What other possibilities for settlement of the case can you see?

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PREPARING FOR THE LAST WORKSHOP SESSIONS

Your workshop will meet one more time for sessions 13, 14, and 15. When these sessions are over, you will be ready to organize a Fairness Committee and begin work in your school. The last session, Session 15, will be devoted to making a plan so that you can get started.

In preparation for that session, each of you should do some thinking on your own. Here are a few questions for you to answer as you think. Fill in your responses in the spaces provided. If you think of additional questions to ask, write them in spaces 8 and 9 or on the back of the page so that the members of the committee can decide what to do about them.

1. How can we get permission to set up a Fairness Committee? _____

_____

_____

2. How can we let students, administration, faculty, and staff know what the Fairness Committee is and how it operates? _____

_____

_____

3. When can we schedule meetings of the Committee, meetings which all members can attend? _____

_____

_____

4. Where should Committee meetings take place? _____

_____

_____

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5. How can we decide who does what tasks when we get our first case? _____

_____

_____

_____

6. What will we do if no one brings a case to the Committee? _____

_____

_____

7. How do we connect with student government? _____

_____

_____

8. _____

_____

_____

9. _____

_____

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Practice makes perfect, or so they say. During your previous workshop session you had an opportunity to practice a fairness committee using a script. You learned about roles of committee members and took part in a fairness hearing. But reading from a script and dealing with a real case are two different things. Today's activity is a step between a script and a real case. It is designed to sharpen all the skills you have learned by calling on you to use them in a simulated case.

These two sessions of the workshop will be devoted to two actual fairness cases which came to a Fairness Committee in a Massachusetts school. Your workshop leader will choose a member of the Committee to represent each student bringing a case before you. The rest of you will play roles as members of the Fairness Committee and try to decide what to do. Sounds like fun, doesn't it, and a real challenge. So:

Get Rid of Unfairness with

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FROM: A Student

RE: Request to transfer from class

DATE: December 15, 1982

While looking through the Student bulletin the first one printed for the 82-83 academic year I came across an article which stated that any student seeking extra help in a course may always seek extra help from that teacher.

I feel I have been denied this opportunity by my teacher, Ms. B, with the end result I flunked the course with a 38.5 grade I had told her on many occasions that I felt I was really falling behind in the class and asked if I could come either before school or after school or during any one of my studies. She said she did not have the time and that it was not part of her job she told me to seek help from the Title I Program. In doing so I was told that my grade point average for the previous year was too high for me to qualify and if there were any openings after all the student's considered to be in need of help and also qualifying, I would then be allowed in to the program.

I explained that I was taking a totally different kind of math but it did not matter. The lady I spoke to told me that I could sign up for the Student volunteers in doing so I had to wait a number of weeks before I actually received help. This was not their fault and I am very grateful for the help I have received from them and am still receiving.

I was out of school a considerable amount of time because I was in the hospital so it took even longer for me to get the help I had been seeking.

I feel that with all that has happened and the injustice that was bestowed upon me that I be able to transfer out of Ms. B's class and into Mr. A's class. Mr. A said he would except me into the class and help in any way he could to catch up with the other students. Since the grade I previously stated has not been turned in yet and still remains an incomplete he said he would help me to make up the work for that term and for this term also.

On December 15, Ms. B told me that I could not transfer . I appealed to the Headmaster and he said I should stay in her class. I think that this decision is unfair to me, and I bring my case to the Fairness Committee.

(written by a student)

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FROM: A Student

RE: A Decision about course requirements

DATE: December 17, 1985

I am interested in math and science and wanted to concentrate on them during my senior year. For this reason, I enrolled in two courses in English while I was a junior. My counselor, Mr. S, told me that I would not have to take English as a senior if I did this.

This fall another Counselor, Ms. E, noticed that I was not taking an English course and told me that I had to take English in order to graduate. Ms. E would not accept my explanation that I had already passed the equivalent of four years of English. I tried to find a clear, written policy that applied to my case. All I could find was a statement that a student had to take four years of English in order to graduate. I took my case to the Department Chariperson and the Headmaster. Both of them said I had to take English every semester I was enrolled in school. I have enrolled in another English course, but doing so means that I have to drop one of the math or science courses I wanted to take in order to prepare myself for college work. This decision seems unfair to me and I ask the Fairness Committee to do something to help me.

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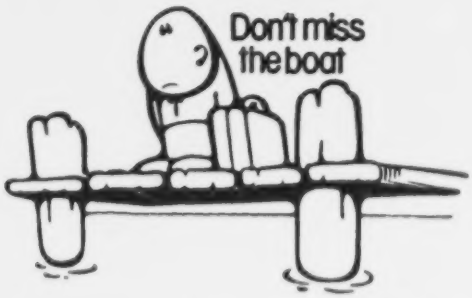
SESSION 15 MAKING A PLAN OF ACTION



This is the last session of the workshop. By now you have studied information about Fairness Committees, learned a variety of important skills, and practiced the techniques you need to run fairness meetings. You are all set to go. But without careful planning, you can still miss the boat. This session can provide the planning which can assure that all of you will be aboard when the Fairness Committee sets sail.

In preparation for this session, you were asked to answer seven questions and to think of other questions which need to be answered as part of the Committee planning. This session will be organized around these questions. When you have answered them, you will be all set to go, all set to make your school a better place to learn and grow.

A final word-- or really two words. The materials for this workshop have been written by five people who have worked with schools for many years. We know from experience that students and teachers can often improve what we write. Won't you help us by sending your suggestions along to:

AND HERE ARE OUR FINAL

WORDS IN ADVANCE TO YOU

Dr. Elsa R. Wasserman
Cadence
159 Thorndike Street
Cambridge, MA 02141

(617)498-9240

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